

RECALL PROPONENTS CLOSE TO SIGNATURE GOAL

Supporters of the campaign to recall Governor Gray Davis, "[Rescue California](#)," say they have collected nearly 900,000 signatures, the minimum number required to qualify for the ballot, but will continue to collect signatures for insurance purposes. The goal is 1.3 million signatures. 897,158 valid signatures are required.

Foes of the recall, "[Taxpayers Against the Governor's Recall](#)," are asking their supporters to "intimidate signature gatherers and complain of harassment at stores where recall petitions are circulating," according to a story in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#). The anti-recall group is circulating its own petition expressing disdain for the recall effort. Those petitions are a plebiscite only, and do not place anything on the ballot.

STILL NO ACTION ON BUDGET – WEEKEND SESSIONS?

Lots of rhetoric and little action marked the week's activities as the June 30 constitutional deadline loomed for the Legislature to send a budget to Governor Davis.

The state Senate met in floor session several times this week to consider a state spending plan including \$11 billion in cuts and a half-cent increase in the state's sales tax, but the proposal ([AB 1769 – Oropeza](#)) was continuously rejected on party-line votes. Senate Republicans contend that the cuts in the Democratic plan are illusory and that no member of their caucus was prepared to vote for a tax increase. In response to a challenge from the majority party, Senate Republican Leader [Jim Brulte](#) (R-Rancho Cucamonga) said that his caucus would present a list of additional cuts to be voted on by the full Senate, probably beginning Monday.

In the Assembly, regular committee hearings were postponed as the 47 Democratic members of the Assembly banded into 13 teams as part of Speaker [Herb Wesson's "Campaign to Save California"](#) and traveled, according to the Speaker's office, "at their own expense into Republican districts to inform local officials, civic leaders and others of the effect that deep cuts and huge deficits would have on local services." Senate Committees were held as scheduled, with Senators and staffers presenting Assembly bills. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the lawmakers found "pockets of support, but also resistance and even hostile crowds."

Controller Steve Westly said Wednesday that if the budget is not enacted on time, roughly \$1.5 billion in state funding for schools, colleges, medical providers, etc., would not be made, and that the cuts would increase as long as the budget stalemate continues. Westly said that the mandated cuts would exceed those of prior years because of the California Supreme Court's May 1, decision in [White v. Davis](#) that the state has no legal authority to make payments without a spending plan in place.

That decision also held that state workers can be paid no more than the federal minimum wage as long as a budget impasse continues. However, because the court gives state finance officials some time to reprogram their payroll computers, lighter paychecks for state employees won't appear until early August if a budget still is not enacted by then.

LAW LIBRARIES CONCERNED BY PROPOSED FEE INCREASES

County law librarians are voicing their concerns about new and increased civil filing fees that make up part of the proposed state budget for fiscal year 2003-04. The new or increased fees would go into effect on July 1, if the Legislature approves a new budget within the next few days. If a state budget is not in place by July 1, the fees would become operable as soon as the new budget and accompanying trailer bills are signed into law.

The fees will be a part of one or more of the numerous trailer bills that help implement the provisions of the annual state budget. Anne Bernardo, president of the Council of California County Law Librarians, said county law libraries are alarmed by the prospect of additional civil filing fees, citing past instances where increased fees equated to greater instances of fee waivers by trial court judges. Since county law libraries are funded primarily through civil filing fees, each fee waiver effectively reduces law library operating revenues.

According to Bernardo, county law librarians view the new and increased fees as a "bad development" in light of their ongoing difficulty in keeping abreast of operating expenses. In recent years, county law library expenses have increased while civil filing fee revenues have declined or remained flat. Ironically, the fee increases represent the Legislature's attempt to partially offset huge General Fund reductions exacted upon the state's trial courts. The courts have suffered huge funding cuts over the past two years.